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THE SITUATION IN CYPRUS

Mr. BIDEN. I rise to congratulate the Senate on having adopted Senate Concurrent Resolution 41, which calls for a United States initiative seeking a just and peaceful resolution on the situation on Cyprus.

Senator Smith of Oregon and I submitted this resolution last week in the Committee on Foreign Relations, where it received speedy and favorable action. I applaud my colleagues for having adopted the resolution today.

For 23 years Cyprus has been divided, with the northern part occupied by Turkish troops, and the southern part home to the Greek Cypriot community. Tensions remain high, and since Cyprus has become one of the most heavily armed places in the world, the possibility for serious hostilities is high. So, Mr. President, it is clear that the status quo on Cyprus is detrimental to U.S. interests in the volatile Eastern Mediterranean region.

The resolution declares that lasting peace and stability on Cyprus could best be served by complete demilitarization leading to the withdrawal of all foreign occupation forces, the cessation of foreign arms transfers to Cyprus, and the provision of alternative internationally acceptable and effective security arrangements with guaranteed rights for both communities as negotiated by the parties.

The resolution also welcomes and supports President

Clinton's commitment to give increased attention to Cyprus as witnessed by Ambassador Holbrook's appointment as Special Presidential Emissary for Cyprus.

Finally, the resolution calls upon the parties to lend their full support and cooperation to United States, United Nations, and other international efforts to promote an equitable and speedy resolution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of international law, relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and democratic principles, including respect for human rights, and in accordance with the norms and requirements for accession to the European Union.

This last item is important, Mr. President, giving the naming earlier this month of Cyprus to the first group of candidate countries for final membership negotiations with the European Union, along with Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Estonia.

Mr. President, the intolerable situation on Cyprus must be changed. Face to face negotiations between the two parties have resumed, and there are some grounds for optimism. I hope that this resolution will serve to energize the parties to come to a just and lasting agreement.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.